IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 21-31, without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a divisional or other continuing application.

No claims have been amended herein. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method of determining allergen activity in dust, comprising:
providing a dust sample;
extracting from the dust sample at least one breakdown component of proteins or peptides;
reacting the extracted at least one breakdown component with a colorimetric amine detection reagent; and
quantitatively measuring the intensity of any resulting coloration, the allergen activity being proportional to the intensity of coloration.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising exposing the dust sample to a protease substrate, the protease substrate having immobilized thereon a protein or peptide on which protease in the dust sample may act.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, further comprising adding a protease inhibitor to the dust sample to suppress activity of a specific protease prior to exposure to the protease substrate.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, in which the protease substrate is protease specific, with only a specific protease being able to act on the protein or peptide immobilized on the protease substrate.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, in which the protease

substrate comprises a filter to facilitate extraction of mobile breakdown components of the protein or peptide immobilized on the protease substrate.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, in which the at least one breakdown component extracted from the dust sample includes amines, amino acids or peptides present in the dust sample.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, in which the colorimetric amine detection reagent is 2,4,6-trinitrobenzene sulphonic acid (hereinafter referred to as TNBSA).

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, in which the at least one breakdown component is extracted by bringing the dust sample into contact with a surface active agent (surfactant).

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, further comprising separating any dust sample solid residues from the surfactant prior to reacting with the colorimetric amine detection reagent.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, in which the surfactant is an aqueous solution comprising sodium dodecyl sulphate.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, in which the aqueous solution is alkaline.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, in which the aqueous solution further comprises sodium hydrogen carbonate.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, in which the intensity of any resulting coloration is quantitatively measured by comparison with at least one reference

color.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 13, in which different color references are selected to indicate at least three different kinds of allergen activity.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising preserving the reaction mixture by using a stopping agent after a preselected incubation period.

16. (Previously Presented) A method of determining allergen activity in dust, comprising:

providing a dust sample;

providing a protease substrate, the protease substrate having immobilized thereon proteins or peptides labeled with a chromogenic substance;

exposing the protease substrate to the dust sample under conditions whereby a protease in the dust sample may act on the immobilized proteins or peptides to produce mobile breakdown components labeled with the chromogenic substance; and

quantitatively measuring the intensity of any resulting coloration, the allergen activity being proportional to the intensity of the coloration.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, further comprising adding a protease inhibitor to the dust sample to suppress activity of a specific protease prior to exposure to the protease substrate.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, in which the protease substrate is protease specific, with only a specific protease being able to act on the proteins or peptides immobilized on the protease substrate.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, in which the protease substrate comprises a filter to facilitate extraction of mobile breakdown components labeled with the chromogenic substance.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, in which the intensity of any resulting coloration is quantitatively determined by comparison with at least one reference color.

21-31. (Canceled).